

Acts Studies: Do We Have a Right to Healing?

Living Between the “Already and the Not Yet”

I. Defining Our Terms — Asking the Right Question

- “*Right*” = something owed, demanded, claimed.
- Not “*Is healing available?*” but “**What should we expect?**”
- A **gift** given by a God who reigns over everything — or a thing we **obtain, access, unlock?** (cf. Acts 5:12–16: even Peter’s shadow; *they were all healed*)

II. The Already and the Not Yet (Romans 8:18–25)

- Two comings of the King: the kingdom has truly come (**already**), but not in full (**not yet**).
- Creation was subjected to futility - yet *in hope*!
- The groaning is *the pains of childbirth* — going somewhere, not the silence after a death.
- **Firstfruits now** (real grace, real healings); the full harvest — *the redemption of our bodies* — **not yet**.

Romans 8:18–25 (ESV)

18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. **19** For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. **20** For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope **21** that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. **22** For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. **23** And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. **24** For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

III. Three Counterfeits

- **Power as a commodity** (Simon): we rarely use cash, but we pay in subtler currency: faith, effort, behavior.

Acts 8:18–20 (ESV)

18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, **19** saying, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” **20** But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!”

- **Power as a formula** (Sons of Sceva) — the name is not “*abra-cadabra*”; a formula tempts us because it promises control.

Acts 19:13–16 (ESV)

13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims.” **14** Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. **15** But the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?” **16** And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

- **Power as a glory-grab** (Lystra) — the apostles tore their own clothes to get the glory off themselves and onto God.

Acts 14:11, 14–15 (ESV)

11 And when the crowds saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in Lycaonian, “The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!” ... **14** But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their garments and rushed out into the crowd, crying out, **15** “Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men, of like nature with you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these vain things to a living God.”

- The thread: each makes the power about *me*; not one is looking at Christ.

IV. Turning Toward a Proper Perspective

- **What looks spiritual often isn’t** — the dramatic dazzles us; the faithful sufferer goes unnoticed. “*The LORD... looks on the heart*” (1 Sam 16:7).
- **Christological & missional** — every healing in Acts points to Christ and opens a door for the gospel.



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- **“But if not”** (Dan 3:17–18) — *our God is able to deliver us — but if not*, we still will not bow: worship that doesn’t hinge on the outcome.
- **Grateful** (Luke 17:15–18; Acts 3:8) — every mercy received as gift and turned to worship in gratitude!
- **What counts as healing?** The sudden miracle *and* the quiet, long-answered prayer alike
- **Apostolic authority** (2 Cor 12:12) — *the signs of a true apostle... with signs and wonders*; they authenticated the gospel, exceptional by design.

V. The Perspective That Exalts Christ

- **Gift, freely given** — the man with no silver gives the priceless thing free, then points it all to the Name; the healing becomes a sermon.
Acts 3:6 (ESV)
6 But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk!”
- **The name on knowing lips** — Peter does nothing; *Jesus* heals; a whole region turns to the Lord.
Acts 9:32–34 (ESV)
32 Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, “Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed.” And immediately he rose.
- **Hands lifted to God, not glory to self** — the hunted church does not claim its healing; it asks God to act.
Acts 4:29–30 (ESV)
29 And now, Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, 30 while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.
- **Power perfected in weakness** — the thorn is not removed; grace is sufficient; the enemy’s messenger is bet to God’s purpose and will.
2 Corinthians 12:7–10 (ESV)
7 So to keep me from becoming conceited because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. 8 Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.
- **Faithful, yet unhealed** — Trophimus (2 Tim 4:20), Timothy’s ailments (1 Tim 5:23), Epaphroditus near death (Phil 2:25–27): these are not faith-failures!
- **God’s providence is not a formula** — James killed, Peter freed (Acts 12:1–11).
- God will either **lighten the load or strengthen the shoulders** (Ps 55:22; Isa 40:29–31).

VI. The Perspective of a Reigning Christ

- A “*right*” would make God our debtor. What we have is better — a Father who **gives**, *the gift of God*.
- Open hands: pray bold, expect miracles, trust the reigning Christ when the answer is *wait*, or even *no*.
- Everyone in Christ **will** be healed — the question is never *whether*, only *when*. If not now, then on the morning that has no evening.
Luke 22:42 (ESV)
42 saying, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”
- Undaunted when the body fails. Undefeated when the answer is no. **Seated** at the Father’s right hand — and still good.

